

Stake Presidency Issues Statement

Was. 14-2-July 30th 1964

The Wasatch Stake Presidency and other stake leaders have recently been approached by sincere individuals who desire to preserve the Stake Tabernacle. We are sympathetic to such views. We recognize there are sound reasons for preserving the pioneer building, that the Tabernacle is the center of attraction in Heber Valley.

THESE VERY FACTS have caused us to try for almost six years to find some solution to our building needs. We feel a brief resume of some of the efforts to preserve the building is proper.

The Church officials in Salt Lake were concerned with the preservation of the Tabernacle. Elder LeGrande Richards, one of our conference visitors, was given the specific assignment of looking over the building and making a recommendation to Salt Lake City. He proposed putting a second floor within the Tabernacle and turning the entire building into classrooms and then building on to the West. The Church hired architects to check over the building and make further recommendations for remodeling. Their first plan and costs were never told to the Stake Presidency. We were informed that the plan was too expensive and a second study was being made. The second recommendation estimated the remodeling

costs at \$70,000 more than the costs of a new building. This extra money would build two small chapels in the mission field and the Church would not approve the remodeling program.

A COMMITTEE WAS organized and approached the County to see if they were interested in purchasing and preserving the building. The County indicated some interest and said they desired the city to join with them in such a venture. Nothing concrete came out of the proposal.

An option was taken on property in the Eastern part of Heber City with the hope of building a stake center there and preserving the Tabernacle. The wards which would have been involved in such a program were not in favor of it and the matter was dropped.

BROTHER CLARK CROOK and a committee he selected met with the Stake Presidency and discussed the problem. Lack of funds has been the big problem in every solution proposed. Brother Crook felt from the promises he had received he could raise the money. So far as we know he never was able to collect the first dollar.

The Wasatch County School District approached the Stake Presidency with the suggestion that the school and church combine in the erection of a building for joint

use. This proposal was taken to the First Presidency who indicated it would be unwise to be involved with a school in joint use and ownership of property.

RECENT LETTERS to us and articles appearing in newspapers refer to the Tabernacle as a "sound building". Architectural engineers who have examined the building with an eye to remodeling it have pointed out cracks that appear in the outside wall and corresponding cracks in the plaster inside the building. They said this may not be serious but that it would have to be investigated before the building could be remodeled. There is a possibility that any program to save the building may cost much more than any the present estimates.

MR. EVERETT L. COOLEY, Director of the Utah State Historical Society, at the invitation of the Stake President, visited the Tabernacle the week before the 24th of July, 1964. After the inspection tour through the building he expressed a strong hope that the building would be saved. But he also expressed the thought that it would not do just to preserve the building, it must be used. If there is not a use for the building he said he would recommend that it be torn down.

THE PRESENT school facilities

are adequate to the point that the school officials have informed us they will no longer use the Tabernacle. When a stake center is built the Church will no longer use the building. The Tabernacle will cost thousands of dollars to maintain. The Church in Salt Lake City has informed us they will assist in the support of one stake building only. To ask the local church members to maintain a building for the community is too burdensome. This is especially true when a portion of the members carry the entire financial load of the Stake.

THERE ARE STILL some who state that we, the Stake Presidency, are going to tear down the building and ignore the wishes of the people. To such persons we would remind them that each ward has twice held a meeting to vote on this very proposal. Every ward has on each occasion voted to raze the Tabernacle and build a new stake center. Some wards voted 100% for the program.

Two stake meetings have been held to vote on a building program. One on the 21st day of April, 1961, included the sisters. A secret written ballot was taken and the majority voted to raze the Tabernacle.

WHEN THE TENNIS Court property was purchased from He-

ber City the Priesthood of the stake were informed that a vote to purchase the property was a vote to remove existing buildings. The vote was almost unanimous to purchase the property.

When the missionary building program was introduced into our stake a vote was taken to see if we wanted it. There were only two votes against the proposal.

The First Presidency has twice written and expressed their view that the building should be razed.

We feel this is the desire of the majority of the people of Wasatch Stake. In our judgment, sustained by your vote, we feel it is impossible to preserve the stake buildings through Church funds.

WE CONDEMN NO one who loves the building and fights for its preservation. But time is short. If there is any group or individual who have a feasible, worthwhile proposal for the preservation, use and maintenance of the Tabernacle, the Stake Presidency will be most happy to meet with them and consider their proposal. If there is no other solution we solicit your unity in the program now proposed.

Sincerely your brethern,
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